grim feature. It gives confidence to their backers.

Joffre was therefore a popular figure.

Why did they not remove him? The victory of the Marne saved him from the consequences of his gravest blunder. That triumph lifted him from penalty to pedestal Then followed a gruesome series of repulses which by every criterion set up by military history would have been ranked as sanguinary defeats. Why was he not deprived of his command then? Was there anyone who had displayed any greater capacity for command available to replace him ? Foch was implicated in most of Joffre's failures from Artois to the Somme. He was therefore ruled out as an eligible successor. Besides, both he and Castelnau were devout and pronounced Catholics, and susceptibilities born of bitter reminiscence had converted that faith into a disqualification for superior command. In France, Petain, Mangin, and Franchet d'Esperey were successes—but had so far given no indication of the brilliant gifts that make for great military leadership in a World War. Nivelle was Joffre's own choice when he realised that the command of the French Army in the field was to pass from his hands. Statesmen are reluctant to remove officials who are honestly doing their duty to the best of their ability merely because they fail in difficult undertakings, unless they are sure of finding an abler substitute. There was nothing

Difficulty from ofr&acing a

better than Joffre visible to the naked eye of the French politician. So Joffre clung to his exalted office with tarnished glory and waning influence at home and abroad.

And now he had gone entirely. He was given the baton of a Marshal of France to hang in the salon of a Parisian villa, and Nivelle took his place.